

**Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice**  
**Minutes of the**  
**Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice**  
**January 11, 2021, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Convened Virtually through Microsoft Teams**

**Members in attendance:** Atty. Jeffrey J. Dowd, Ms. Krista Hess, Ms. Dawn La Valle, Co-Chairs; Atty. Jamey Bell, Atty. Jan Chiaretto, Ms. Heather Collins, Ms. Melissa Canham-Clyne, Ms. Ann H. Doherty, Atty. Tais C. Ericson, Ms. Kate Frank, Atty. Cheryl Halford, Mr. Christopher M. Roy, Atty. Anne Rajotte

**Members absent:** Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio, Mr. Robert D. Farwell, Atty. Patricia Cruz Fragoso, Atty. Alexandra Gillett

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

Jeff Dowd, Co-Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed members, including new members Melissa Canham-Clyne, Director, Hamden Public Library, and Robert Farwell, Director, Otis Public Library, Norwich

**I. Review and approval of draft minutes – January 7, 2020**

The minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting of the Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice were approved.

**II. Public Service Announcement**

Jeff reported that the PSA draft has been reviewed and translated into Spanish and Portuguese. He stated that the next step is to record the PSA and that the recording will be put on “hold” until such time as access to a quality recording environment is available. Also, Jeff noted that information for the start web page needs to be drafted. Jeff, Chris and Ann will draft a short description about the services of Law Library Services. Krista will draft the same for the Court Service Centers. Jeff suggested that the drafts include both current available services and services available post the pandemic restrictions.

**III. Training Programs – adapting to online format**

**Legal Research – Public Librarians**

Chris Roy and Anne Rajotte reported that they have been reviewing the “Hands on Legal Research” program which in the past provided in-person instruction to public librarians. Both Chris and Anne stated that they believe the program will convert very well to an online format. There was some discussion concerning the platform to be used to present. Teams, as it is currently used by Judicial, may not provide full functionality for break-out rooms. Dawn LaValle and Anne discussed the various platforms used by their respective institutions which are available to host the program. Chris stated that whatever platform is used, testing will be conducted to ensure the full functionality of the program features. Chris and Anne, together with Cheryl Halford will review and revise the program handouts, as needed.

**IV. Legal Corner**

Jeff reported that the plan for the Legal Corner is to provide the public libraries with a desktop shortcut that will link to a modified version of the Law Library Services’ “Representing Yourself” web page. Jeff asked members to review the current page and forward to him any suggestions for additions and/or revisions by Friday, January 15, 2021. Links to be added would include the Judicial “Legal Clinics and Help” page, and the Court Service Center contact page.

## **V. Speakers' Bureau – update**

Jeff reported that he would request that a checkbox be added to the Speaker's Bureau (Employee) brochure to indicate that the request is for a "remote" presentation. Jeff also stated that additional access points to the brochure would be posted on the Law Library Services' "For Librarians" web page and the Judicial Speaker's Bureau page.

## **VI. New Items**

Melissa Canham-Clyne, Director, Hamden Public Library, reported that her library is currently closed and offers contactless services, only. Melissa also noted that the librarians are experiencing a noticeable increase in questions from patrons involving legal issues.

Dawn reported that public libraries statewide are handling an increasing number of reference questions requesting legal help.

Jan Chiaretto, Statewide Legal Services, reported that her organization is experiencing a similar increase in requests for help with law related issues. Currently, a pilot program is being developed to offer an online navigational "chat" service on the CTLawHelp website. The goal is to assist people using the website to get the help needed as soon as possible. Kate Frank reported that the model is still being tested and the plan is to have law students provide the chat assistance once the program is operational.

Jamey Bell, Greater Hartford Legal Assistance, reported a concern involving the Judicial Branch Remote Justice hearings and the need for individuals to have access to connectivity to be able to participate. Jamey questioned if discussions have taken place concerning people who need a computer or device, and /or perhaps a space, to participate in a remote court hearing.

In response, Dawn stated that the public libraries in some municipalities received grant money to purchase hot spots and devices for the public to borrow. Also, some libraries are creating pod rooms to provide space for a private remote interactions.

Krista Hess stated that the Judicial Branch is developing rooms in certain courthouses that will be available to accommodate individuals involved in remote hearings who do not have access to a device or the necessary connectivity.

## **VII. Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 a.m.